2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

562 a daughter and no son she has the right to remain a hundred days
592 in the house. Then if the heirs order her to leave she must go, but her
[583] daughter remains as part of the heir's household, and he has the right to choose her husband and dispose of her. In practice the widow may
587 remain in the house as "levirate wife" of one of her brothers-in-law, and very commonly does so among the Dukagini. In Maltsia e Madhe the practice is obsolete.

● 539 If the widow has had a son who has predeceased his father, she
562 has more consideration. If the house is a small one, she may live in it if capable of carrying on. If a large one, she may live as a member of the heir's household so long as she is unmarried. If she elects to return
[593] to her father, the heir, or heirs, must supply her regularly with wool for spinning, bread, cheese, and other necessaries so long as she remains unmarried.

421 A married daughter has no right to anything whatever of her father's property; she no longer belongs to his "house."

TRIBAL BUSINESS

623 Business relating to the whole tribe requires a very large council. In a large tribe the council may be about a hundred. It includes the heads of houses, the heads of mehalas, the bariaktar, and twelve specially chosen elders famed for their intelligence. Such a council, for example, was needed to decide if each tribe would accept the Turkish Constitution in 1908; to decide if a tribe would revolt or aid another that has revolted; what side it would take in war, and so forth. Smaller councils dealt with pasture lands; how many beasts each house might pasture upon the common lands; the date at which pasturing might begin.

421 The rights of wood-cutting, too, were thus regulated. Certain groups
311 had rights in certain woods. Unluckily no one ever thought of replanting. Great harm has been done by deciding to burn a forest in the
[134] hope of obtaining pasture land; only too often the result being that the winter rain carried away the soil and left bare rock. The water
312 supply is also controlled by council, especially in those districts where an ingenious system of channels carries water great distances and takes it across valleys on rude aqueducts made of hollowed tree-stems.
689 In time of scarcity the number of hours per week in which a man may turn the water into his fields is jealously regulated. Purposely defiling wells and springs was punishable.

671 Not only all the above laws are ascribed to Lek, but many rules intended to keep the peace. For example, that men marching abreast must keep the length of a gun-barrel apart, lest in turning hastily it

291
1892

[Facing p. 193]

PLATE VII.—BOGA BOY IN FULL DRESS

(See p. 23)

PLATE VIII.-

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

291
●589
142

ALBANIAN ALBANIAN VIRGIN

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

of the shortage of women. This, I believe, is largely caused by the high rate of mortality in childbirth and the extremely hard lives of the women.

A girl, once betrothed, is the property of the family which has bought her, and must be *intacta virgo* when handed over. The most important object of marriage is to obtain sons. A sonless man had no one to avenge him, and his soul would never rest. Therefore in old days, when a girl was handed over, it was usual that the couple should cohabit, but no marriage ceremony should take place till a son was born. The Church has actively fought this custom and almost abolished it. But some cases still occur. Even when the unfortunate woman bore several daughters she might still be treated as worthless; and a married woman who has borne only daughters and is left as a widow has not the right to stay in the family house, but may be permitted to do so. If this is not allowed, her own nearest male relative has the right to sell her again—cheap. I heard of a nephew who had sold his aunt twice.

In a report on the missionary work in Albania made by the Franciscan father Donato Maria di Trento in 1740, he states that the priests are doing all they can to prevent parents from allowing the betrothed to cohabit before marriage, which custom, he says, is universal, and describes as "a most foul torrent of universal concubinage." "They will not contract marriage till offspring is obtained."

Girls being thus married without any choice of their own, and being miserable in strange surroundings, were naturally apt to run away. In the above report this is constantly mentioned as cause of great trouble and feud. Thus Padre Candido reports from Gruda, January 31, 1740: "Women are running away every day, even after marriage." And P. Bonaventura says: "The women are running away *a grandissima furia*."

The custom of child betrothal and payment of parents is described and signed by thirteen padres and the Bishop of Scutari in 1731, and it is stated that it is great disgrace for the betrothed to see each other before they cohabit, or for the bride even to speak with the relatives of the bridegroom. The two parties are never consulted, and "in this country the youth never make love."

To counteract these difficulties the Mission makes much use of the local custom of swearing a common oath in which those swearing it call down all kinds of imprecations on their heads should they be forsworn. Consequent upon the swearing of many such oaths the Mission reports sixty-four marriages celebrated either before or immediately after cohabitation. P. Bonaventura triumphantly states that thirteen married by him are still with their husbands; but of those

585 married by P. Francesco one ran away six weeks ago and cannot be found.

584 When I was there in 1908 things were better, but old customs clung. The main idea of the clergy was to insist that a betrothal must not be broken off, but to prohibit child betrothals.

583 All priests were ordered to question the girl as to her wishes before
585 celebrating the marriage. Few girls, however, have the courage to resist the commands of the house and the usage of the tribe. Among the wilder tribes girls who objected were still sometimes carried off bound with cords and forced to comply; and, cohabitation having taken place, the priest married them.

581 Among the Dukagini tribes infant betrothal was still common.
584 The fine old bairaktar of Nikaj, Bash Bairimi, told me that he thanked God he owed no one blood; all his five sons were alive and four were married. The fifth, aged twenty-five, was yet unmarried. Not because Bash grudged the money. He would pay willingly, but could find no maiden good enough. He wanted good blood. A woman of bad stock makes endless trouble. He had betrothed the four elder lads to unborn brides; but had not done this with the fifth and was sorry, for all good maidens were already betrothed. He was looking out for a suitable widow. Money, he repeated, was no object; he would not stick at a few more napoleons to buy a really suitable woman.

583 A result of high bride-price and shortage of women was a good deal of woman-stealing between the outlying tribes. I was told that many of the blood-feuds of Shala were based upon the abduction of girls from neighbour tribes. If a betrothed girl went off with another man, willingly or unwillingly, a blood-feud always started. She was the property of the family that had bought her and had no rights over her person.

584 *Escape from Betrothal.*—In one way only could a girl evade a marriage
589 she disliked. If she could find twelve elders of her tribe group to act as con-jurors she could swear perpetual virginity. If she broke the vow the honour of the con-jurors was blackened and a blood-feud ensued. It was not easy for her to find twelve con-jurors.

689 Having succeeded and taken the vow in the church or mosque, her
626 status is, I believe, unique. In the Maltsia e Madhe she can, if she pleases, dress as a man. She associates with the men on equal terms,
689 and eats and smokes with them. She may carry arms. The reason given
562 is that as she has no man to support her she must support herself,
839 and a herdsman's life is the only way. I met altogether four virgins who wore men's clothes, but none carried arms. I heard of three more. One in the Djakova district was said to have served in the Turkish Army undetected.

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

law was taken to wife more often than not. To remonstrances the reply was, "She belongs to us," and it was pointed out it was the only way to get a wife without paying for her.

[589] In these districts, if the widow is sold, the bride-price is shared by her husband's family and her father's.

A man at Nikaj came to see me who was excommunicate for having two wives—a legitimate wife and the widow of his cousin. He told me he could not possibly put her away because it would be a disgrace to do so. She must stay in the house because she had young children to bring up, and so long as she is in the house he must cohabit with her, for she cannot have another husband. He was unhappy about the excommunication—but one must do one's duty and take the risk.

It is perhaps noteworthy that in the districts where this custom is firmly rooted there are no Slavonic place-names and no appearance of any Slavonic blood. The people are all in stature shorter and smaller built than the Maltsia e Madhe people. They are almost all dark-eyed—dark-brown to hazel—and dark-haired. The skull is short, but is round at the back and has not the characteristic flat back of the folk farther north. The hair grows very low on the forehead, especially on the temples, where sometimes it almost unites by a thin line of hair with the outer end of the eyebrow. The eyebrows often nearly meet in the middle. The nose is short and straight. The moustache is sparse and straggly. The beard, such as is seen after a fortnight without shaving, often sparse or patchy.

The custom of the levirate may therefore belong to the small, dark, pre-Slavonic people.

The purpose of the levirate in other lands is often said to be to raise up children who are to rank as those of the deceased. Though this may have been the reason in the above-mentioned case of the man who took the very recently married widow of his brother, in the great majority of cases in Albania it is not so; for the widow with sons is the one who has the right to remain, and in fact must remain, in the family house; and therefore it is she who is most frequently the levirate wife. In this matter Albanian custom seems to differ from that in other lands where the levirate is practised.

4. Rights of Husband over Wife

No one may beat a woman but her father or her husband. In the mountains a husband had the right to beat his wife if he told her three times to do, or not to do, a thing, and she disobeyed each time. If he orders her not to reply and she does so he may beat her. Even some

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

bours. One of their chief offences, in the eyes of the strictly orthodox, is the scant attention paid by the wives of these sectarians to the law of *namekhram*, or wearing the veil, it being their practice to appear unveiled before their husband's friends when he gives them permission to do so.

Cloistered life is not more popular with the women of Albania than with those of the rest of Turkey. In Islam there is, of course, no such resource for disappointed maidens, and marriage being as much the rule among Christians, whether orthodox Greek or Roman Catholic, as among Moslems, nunneries are not numerous, and their inmates are but few. Those which exist, however, offer a welcome asylum to the small section of women whom circumstances have doomed to a life of celibacy, and who the more willingly enter them as they, by so doing, acquire a degree of liberty which could never be theirs while living as unmarried women in the house of their father or brother. For in the East, as I have before remarked, convent rule is remarkably lax, and, beyond attending the prescribed church services, no very strict account is required of the way in which the good sisters spend their time. If report speaks true, they do not always refrain from making use of the opportunities for flirtation afforded them by their emancipation from conventional restraint.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

railing at him, threatened to make him set up a separate home, which would reduce both him and her to a lower level of comfort. Custom, it is true, under the stress of hard necessity, sanctioned his working alongside her in the fields, but only on condition that he did not indulge in unnecessary or frivolous conversation with her. The only explanation which Albanians offered of these restrictions was that a husband and a wife felt 'ashamed' in each other's presence. The same feeling existed all over the Balkans until they came under strong western influences a generation ago. Before that every decorous peasant bride, whatever her race or religion, refrained for several years after her marriage from speaking at all to her husband in public and spoke to him in whispers only in private, meanwhile keeping her eyes modestly downcast. This behaviour seems to originate in an idea which is prevalent throughout the Near East. The Greeks say that since only the celibate life is really holy, the matrimonial state is one of sin and therefore of shame. In I Cor. vii, 8, St Paul voiced it when he wrote, 'I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I'. Moslems, too, believe this, in spite of many being polygamists. There is, for instance, a married as well as a celibate branch of the Bektashi Order of dervishes, but it has so few supporters that at the central monastery at Haci Bektas in the heart of Asia Minor its headquarters are little more than a poverty-stricken excrescence on the enormous, wealthy headquarters of the celibates, and in Albania it has only the monastery at Qesarakë in the south-east, compared with the seventy maintained for the celibates in different parts of the country.

Now the Unwritten Law of Albania ordained that every married woman had the right to visit her own relatives at least once a year. Since these frequently lived in a different village, she could not travel to or from them without an escort, which neither custom nor the law allowed her husband to provide in person. Since brothers were everywhere allowed to talk to each other's wives, no difficulty arose in a communal household, where any man except the husband could accompany a wife to her parents' home and fetch her back. In a house with only one man matters were more complicated. If his mother were alive and physically fit for the journey, she might go with his wife, but who would then cook his supper and prepare his bed for the night? If his mother were dead

593 maternal uncle's children. Then when the bride joins her husband in his father's house, she will come directly under the supervision of her paternal aunt, a woman whom she has already seen, and who represents an extension of her own family in the strange household. Such an ideal arrangement still makes no provision for a selection of mates on the basis of personality adjustments. It merely makes the change from one household to the other a little easier than if the girl were a total stranger. Very often a girl's fiancé is killed and she has to marry one of his brothers, a cousin, or someone of an entirely different family, and there will be no familiar aunt to smooth things over, but instead a suspicious and exacting mother-in-law, with whom her only ties are through her husband.

583 It is no wonder that brides sometimes run away. If they come home their fathers usually return them. Not infrequently they elope and if they are lucky settle in some city, or distant countryside where the limb of Lek Dukagin's [538] law is not long enough to reach them. Gheg epic poetry, which the traveler hears sung night after night in private houses, hans, and gendarmeries, dwells frequently on the theme of elopement. One hears at length about couple after couple, hopelessly in love, who break all of the rules, run away, and meet a tragic but inexorable fate. In the epics they seldom if ever make good their escape. In real life I believe that they sometimes succeed, and their elopements, successful or otherwise, help reduce the population of the mountains.

589 If a young woman is faced with a marriage which she cannot bring herself to consummate, and if she has enough strength of character to take the following step, she can avoid matrimony by becoming a "sworn virgin" (fig. 10, *d*).* She summons a meeting of the 12 elders of her community and in their presence swears perpetual chastity. By this means she not only gets out of her engagement, but also prevents a feud between her father's kin and those of [838] her fiancé. At this point she becomes technically a man. She may or may not don masculine clothing. She will carry a gun, and fight like other men. She will plough and reap, and do all of the tasks of a man. If she breaks her oath, the elders will, in theory, burn

* [See cat. no. 6, p. 110.--Analyst]

589 her alive. It is doubtful if this punishment has been exacted on any such person within the last few generations.

As the reader can readily see, this custom has its economic aspects. The number of hands available for men's work is increased by two, that for women's work decreased by the same number. There is a second and less dramatic reason for a girl to swear virginity: if her father has no sons to help him with his work, or if his sons are killed. Then a daughter may step into the position of a son, and the [427] situation is momentarily saved. However, since the pseudo-son will have no offspring, the line will become extinct with her death, and the property pass to the next of kin on the father's side. This custom is at variance with the usual one in comparable societies, in which the husband of the man's daughter comes to live with her parents, and is adopted as an [611] heir. So strong is the belief in the continuity of the male line that this could not be done in Ghegnia.

On my travels I encountered only 2 sworn virgins. One wore men's clothes, and appeared to be either mentally defective or at least "queer." That also was her reputation. The second wore women's clothes. She was in her early twenties, and quite attractive. Since she spent the night with a junior member of my group of horse-drivers, I formed a poor opinion of the burning-alive theory. It is quite apparent that the practice of swearing virginity is not only often economic in motivation, but also a part of the whole business of local population control, along with the entire configuration of pride, insult, and feuding.

587 Two other mechanisms help maintain the personnel of the family at the optimum numerical working level, and to prevent the isolation of separate individuals or small, uneconomic groups. One is the levirate. Classically this means that when a man dies, his widow will be married to a surviving brother [165] or next of kin if such a brother is lacking. In a country where the rate of death by violence [582] reaches the level of 40 per cent of all male deaths in some localities, and where girls are married at 14 or 15, many are widowed.

Such a widow must be cared for by the men of her husband's family, since they have paid